



July 29-31, 2022
Calder Plaza and Ottawa Ave.
Grand Rapids, MI

Firefighter Challenge Overview



Mission

The mission of the **Firefighter Challenge** is to promote and showcase the talents, skills, and athleticism of America's firefighter heroes and heroines. This challenge is an exciting and entertaining sports competition that travels the United States, simulating the essential skills of firefighting. Competitors will climb a five-story tower, drag and hoist fire hoses, simulate forcible entry, and race around obstacles. The Challenge motivates, identifies, and celebrates America's "best of the best" firefighters.

Competitors will take on our skills-based course tackling what are known as the Five Essential Functions™. Sworn firefighters will compete this season off-air in full turnout gear which they must provide. Civilian athletes will compete against each other in personal athletic wear.

Competitors can choose from individual, relay, or tandem competitions. Each race will duplicate the physical demands of real-life firefighting by climbing the five-story tower, hoisting, chopping, dragging hoses, and rescuing a life-sized, 175-pound "victim" as participants race against themselves, their opponents, and the clock. The camaraderie, encouragement, and takeaway experiences firefighters have at each event are immeasurable. This fun gathering of local, national, and international firefighters unites all involved in their inspiring and individual journeys of improving their personal and professional mental, physical and medical well-being. The challenge prepares them to be the absolute best they can be in an occupation that demands they be ready to endure the unexpected at a moment's notice.

[Firefighter Challenge Details and Sign Up](#)

History

"Competition with a Purpose" – The origins of the Firefighter Challenge started in 1975 with a U.S. Fire Administration grant to the University of Maryland to develop and validate a job-related physical performance examination for firefighters. The principal investigators of the study were Dr. Charles O. Dotson and Dr. Paul O. Davis. While subsequently working as a leading occupational physiologist 15 years later, Dr. Davis continued to marvel over the competitive nature of firefighters he and Dr. Dotson observed in 1975 – when he came up with the idea that

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would eventually become the Firefighter Challenge. "Why not partner with industry leaders in public safety to devise a "competition with a purpose" that would highlight the unique nature of the fire service's heroic work, while showcasing the talents and capabilities of firefighters." The first Challenge was held in 1991. Thirty years later, the Firefighter Challenge looks forward to partnering with incredible companies like 3M Scott Fire and Safety for the next 30 years.



Why Grand Rapids?

Situated along the Grand River approximately 25 miles east of Lake Michigan, Grand Rapids is the economic and cultural hub of West Michigan, as well as one of the fastest-growing cities in the Midwest. A historic furniture manufacturing center, Grand Rapids is home to five of the world's leading office furniture companies and is nicknamed "Furniture City." Other nicknames include "River City" and more recently, "Beer City". Grand Rapids and surrounding communities are economically diverse, based in the health care, information technology, automotive, aviation, and consumer goods manufacturing industries, and home to the only accredited ISO One fire department in the state.

The GRFD Fire Prevention Foundation will bring this amazing event to Grand Rapids with the aim to lead a global movement in hopes of inspiring and transforming the health and well-being of First Responders. We serve to raise awareness of the fire department, educate our neighborhoods and school on fire safety, provide smoke alarm installation in homes, and cultivate the next generation of community servants. This Challenge is an exciting opportunity to support the men and women of the fire service who do so much selfless work for the community.

The **Grand Rapids Firefighter Challenge**, hosted July 29-31,2022, will bring together individuals and teams from around the country to compete in the 5-course evolution. Grand Rapids is a city that encourages and involves our community members, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and non-profit agencies to work together for the betterment of all and to continue our inclusive motto, we will be hosting a Kid's Challenge, a Charity Relay Challenge, and provide fun activities for the whole family to participate in. Of course, we will include our local breweries, and food trucks for all to enjoy. In addition, we will offer future firefighters the opportunity to learn more about the Grand Rapids Fire Department.



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Next Generation of Firefighters

If your goal is to be a firefighter, here is your opportunity to step up to the challenge and compete or learn more about [what it takes to be a member of a fire department](#). There is nothing better than experiencing firsthand if this is the career for you! The weekend will also allow you to experience the Firefighter Challenge course and feel the exhilaration of being a firefighter. One of the goals of the event is to bring awareness of the urgent need and recruitment of an inclusive, diverse, and enriched new generation of first responders. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the weekend to explore the steps of becoming a firefighter, including a recruitment booth and an 'on course' recruitment experience that can be registered for on the [GR Firefighter Challenge Sign up site](#) by choosing "Be a Firefighter". From all of us at the Grand Rapids Fire Department, we welcome all candidates, questions, and interest in what we do!

Charity and Corporate Challenge

Have you ever wanted to be a Firefighter for the Day? Do you have a passion to help your local heroes or charity? The **Charity Relay Challenge** provides opportunities for local companies and non-profits to create a team-building experience by running a relay version of the Firefighter Challenge on their course. Each agency will raise funds prior to the event using the crowdsource platform and donate the total to a charity of their choice or directly to the **Grand Rapids Fire Prevention Foundation** (38 La Grave Ave SE Grand Rapids, MI 49503 phone: 616.456.3933) where the contribution will impact the community through the neighborhood and school public education programs, smoke alarm programs, and community awareness program.

It's easy to participate! Just recruit five (5) of your friends, family, or coworkers to join you for a fun, friendly relay competition going head-to-head with other local teams on the most recognized firefighter training course in the world. No training required! Our firefighters will be your coaches at the event. Charity relay competitors will compete in personal athletic wear.

[Charity Relay Challenge Overview](#)
[Charity Relay Challenge Registration details and Sign Up](#)

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Kid's Firefighter Challenge and Activities

"I want to be a firefighter!" is a phrase every child has uttered at some point in their youth. The **Kid's Firefighter Challenge**, presented by MEIJER, is a scaled-down version of the real FFC, complete with miniature bunker gear, miniature fire hoses, and an obstacle course. This color coordinated hands-on learning opportunity highlights valuable fire safety and prevention tips and is a huge hit for kids ages 5-12 years. There will also be additional family friendly activities that promote fun, wellness, and fire safety!

How You Can Become Involved

Just as the fire department is here to serve you and our community, we know many people want to serve and help us. Hosting the Firefighter Challenge has many areas of need: financial and in-kind sponsorship, community vendors and agencies, volunteering, and many more opportunities. **Click one of the available links below** or visit the [Grand Rapids Fire Department City webpage](#) for more information.

[Sponsorship Opportunities and Payment](#)

[In-Kind Donations](#)

[Volunteer Form Signup](#)

Information on special hotel rates is available on the sign-up sites for the Firefighter or Charity Relay Challenges.

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